

Ex-Vietnam Services Association (EVSA)

A Brief Background 1975 - 2006

1. EVSA's origins date back to 1975 when the first reunion of New Zealand Viet Nam veterans was held.
2. The name Ex-Vietnam Services Association was adopted at the 1978 Reunion General Meeting held in Rotorua.
3. Since then, the EVSA has established a pattern of biennial reunions. The 2006 Reunion is the 14th EVSA reunion and marks the organization's 30th year.
4. The EVSA has some 1800 current members.
5. EVSA's membership includes Associate Members who are widows of New Zealand veterans and also Viet Nam veterans from Australia and the United States.
6. The EVSA keeps its members informed through *Contact* magazine which is published quarterly.
7. The EVSA maintains a network of Area Representatives and Pension Advisers staffed by volunteers throughout New Zealand and in most states of Australia.
8. The EVSA provides welfare and war pension services to Viet Nam veterans and their families regardless of whether they are current members of EVSA.
9. The EVSA conducts a range of membership and fund-raising activities to support its efforts on behalf of its members and Viet Nam veterans in general.
10. The EVSA makes financial contributions to the EVSA (Neville Wallace) Youth Development Trust, which makes grants to assist veterans' children in pursuing education, sporting, etc. endeavors.
11. EVSA mandated and supported the veteran initiated and organized **Parade '98** conducted to publicly acknowledge the service of New Zealand Viet Nam veterans.
12. The EVSA has made submissions on behalf of veterans in respect of their exposure to Agent Orange and other chemicals during their Viet Nam service. This has included direct representations to Government and also to official inquiries such as that held by the Parliamentary Health Select Committee in 2003/2004.
13. Since October 2004, the EVSA has been particularly active in following up with Government the recommendations of the Health Select Committee. Supported by the RNZRSA, the EVSA initiated dialogue with the Government which led to the establishment of the Joint Working Group on the Concerns of Viet Nam Veterans chaired by former State Services Commissioner, Michael Wintringham. In 2005/2006 the JWG carried out a series of consultation meetings with Viet Nam veterans and their families throughout New Zealand and held video conferences with groups of New Zealand veterans living in Australia. The JWG Report & Recommendations is currently being considered by the Government and the EVSA is maintaining positive dialogue with Government during this critical stage. It is anticipated the Government's response to the JWG recommendations will be announced within the next few months.